
September 6, 2023

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The Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) is a national, nonprofit coalition of public agencies and organizations working together to advance clean energy.

CESA members—mostly state agencies—include many of the most innovative, successful, and influential public funders of clean energy initiatives in the country.
Scaling Up Solar for Under-Resourced Communities

How can we ensure that solar technologies benefit all Americans regardless of income?

Funded by the U.S. Department of Energy’s Solar Energy Technology Office
Scaling Up Solar for Under-Resourced Communities Tracks

- Single-Family Homes
- Manufactured Homes
- Community Institutions
Scaling Up Solar for Under-Resourced Communities Tracks

- Single-Family Homes
- Manufactured Homes
- Community Institutions

Community institutions in the context of the report and this project means **institutions that serve an LMI community**, including multifamily affordable housing, senior care facilities, health centers, homeless shelters, etc.

Vero Bourg-Meyer and Warren Leon with research contributions from Yu Suzuki
Clean Energy States Alliance

April 2023

www.cesa.org/resource-library/resource/energize-your-impact
Energize Your Impact Report
Foundations Strategies to Support LMI Solar

Vero Bourg-Meyer
September 6, 2023

www.cesa.org
The Scaling Up Solar for Under-Resourced Communities Project

Overall Project Goal
• Ensure that solar technologies benefit all people regardless of income

Why LMI Solar?
• Mitigate climate change
• Reduce bills/shutoffs
• Increase resilience benefits on populations already under financial and emotional stress
• Develop economic and employment opportunities
• Reduce pollution exposure
• Provide consumers with choices
Why LMI Solar is Hard

There are many barriers to LMI solar access. For example:

- Upfront costs
- Lack of access to financing
- Ineffectiveness of traditional federal income tax credits
- Renting and housing policy
- Lack of enabling legislation for solutions like community solar
- Lack of interest of marketers
- Capacity constraints of customers (time and familiarity)
- Physical barriers due to building integrity
- Asbestos/lead/mold
- Language barriers
- Lack of internet access
- Lack of information
- And on and on
Why LMI Solar is Hard

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- **Lack of information**
- And on and on
Three Major Buckets for Foundation Support in the Report

Foundations, among other things, can:

• **Reduce costs** [Upfront costs + Lack of access to financing]

• **Facilitate access to** corporate-level and project-level **funding** to support market building [Lack of interests of marketers]

• **Support demand** from customers [Capacity constraints + Lack of information]
Eight Models, Advantages, and Challenges...

- Project Grants
- Regranting
- Donation of Solar Assets
- Program Related Investment Loan
- Loan Guarantee
- Equity Investment
- Technical Assistance Funding
- Operating Grant and Capacity Building Program

For example
... Along with Eight Case Studies

- Project Grants
- Granting
- Donation of Solar Assets
- PRI Loan
- Loan Guarantee
- Equity Investment
- Technical Assistance Funding
- Operating Grant and Capacity Building Program
Read More

https://tinyurl.com/SUS2023Report
Upcoming Webinars

Predevelopment Funding for LMI Solar and Storage Projects: A Case Study from New York (9/19)

Battery Decommissioning, Recycling, and Reuse (9/20)

Energy Storage for Peak Demand Reduction: A New Incentive Program by Efficiency Maine (9/28)

Read more and register at www.cesa.org/webinars
The Honnold Foundation partners with marginalized communities to expand equitable solar energy access.

**Vision:** We envision a world where marginalized communities lead the transition to renewable energy, with the resources they need to adapt and thrive.
Our Journey

Supporting solar energy access worldwide since 2012.

2012
- Founded by Alex Honnold

2013
- Alex commits ⅓ of income to solar projects around the world

2018
- Incorporated as an independent 501c3 Nonprofit, hired first team member + formed BoD
- Launched the Core Fund, 12 inaugural Partners & $1M in funding, against 800 applications & $100+ million in requests

2020
- Core Fund scales, $2M+ in grants to 24 Partners; Levine Impact Lab launch.

2022
- 60+ Partners, 24+ countries, worldwide impact.

TODAY
Our Approach

Wrap-around support guided by our partners

**Intentional** capacity building responding directly to partners’ needs

**Unrestricted** funding to support community-driven projects

**Partner-led** storytelling and communications support
Communities are the experts. The most sustainable solutions are created by communities, for communities. We provide unrestricted grants that support the direct needs of our partner organizations and their communities.

Once a partner, always a partner. Change takes time. We stand by our partners long after their projects are completed to support their work.

Prioritize people and the planet. Solar energy is a tool. The impacts of our partners’ projects are catalyzing change across their communities and environments.
By the Numbers

HF is one of the few intermediary funders focused on renewable energy access in marginalized communities.

- 60+ Partners in 27 countries, territories, and US Tribal Lands
- Over ⅔ of projects include solar-related job-training and workforce development.
- Supporting solar powered conservation of over 580,000 acres of rainforest.
- Increased access to education and healthcare for over 50,000 people worldwide.
- Nearly 2 mW of community solar built, avoiding an est. 38k+ metric tons of CO2.

$5 million to support solar energy access worldwide.
Our Programs

Diversified impact strategies led by industry experts to catalyze global impact

**CORE FUND**

The **Core Fund** supports community-scale solar energy initiatives worldwide, with a special focus on projects that are innovative, grassroots, and community-driven.

**LEVINE IMPACT LAB**

The **Levine Impact Lab** powers equitable impact by investing in grassroots leaders and organizations, building their capacity to accelerate positive change.

**MICROGRID PARTNERSHIPS**

With a pilot project in Puerto Rico, we are supporting battery-backed microgrids in some of the world’s most climate-sensitive regions. Our inaugural microgrid serves 14 small businesses in central Puerto Rico and provides hurricane proof battery storage for up to 10 days.
Co-Development in Practice: LIL

Levine Impact Lab (LIL): 3-year cohort-style program that works with grassroots organizations in the HF partner network to build and strengthen organizational capacity and individual leadership.

Partner-Led Development

- Partner surveys and interviews identified the primary needs of growing organizations and the gaps in services that currently exist.
- An ongoing participatory evaluation engages cohort members in data collection and management, providing real and honest feedback.
- Cohort members co-design curriculum and agendas to make sure they’re relevant and impactful.
Native Renewables Partnership

Grant Support

• 2021: grant award to support 3 new solar installations on the Hopi & Diné reservations, triage 3 systems and pilot a lending program

• 2022: an extended multi-year grant to support first-time energy access for 5 families and upgrade PV systems for 2 more families

• NR’s workforce training programs has helped 4 solar fellows transition into full-time NR staff members

• Solar panel donations from REC & focused capacity building support around communications, strategic planning & more

Levine Impact Lab

• Direct and tailored organizational and individual support for 3 NR staff and leaders

• 1:1 mentorship as NR’s builds their plan to scale their impact over the next 3yrs

• General operating grants to support NR’s ongoing needs
Feed the Second Line Partnership

FTSL is building community and creating safety nets for residents across New Orleans, preserving the city's vibrant culture.

- HF awarded FTSL a grant to install solar+battery storage on restaurants in predominantly Black, low-income neighborhoods, building a network of microgrids that will offer food, electricity, and a safe place for communities in the wake of natural disasters.
- 1 restaurant can deliver mutual aid to 400-600 people/wk
- Restaurant owners are provided with a forgivable loan to cover solar costs so that they retain ownership of the solar technology components.

Catalyzing Investment & Impact

- Wrap-around support and funding in line with our NR partnership
- HF support helped FTSL secure a $300K award from the city of New Orleans and a $200K grant from the federal government
- HF facilitated media connections resulting in a front-page article in BizNOLA featuring FTSL!
FTSL & The Levine Impact Lab

- Tailored support and direct mentorship for a first-time Executive Director
- Financial consultant to support sustainable budget development and growth as the organizations scales
- Monthly 1:1 advising sessions to develop a 3 - 5 year impact vision and program plan
- General operating grant and consultant funds to support ongoing needs
Lessons Learned & Opportunities

Trust-based philanthropy requires a **true and honest commitment** to both the project and the people.

- Flexibility, empathy and understanding are key components to grassroots philanthropy
- Funders who base their priorities on the needs of their partners will have the most impact
- Funding in a limited geographic area can be more strategic for smaller funders
- More funding is needed for grassroots organizations in the US SE
- Funding that supports wrap-around support and general operations are sparse
- While federal funding is helpful it is often difficult to access and comes with red tape that is prohibitive for grassroots organizations
- Current trends show that philanthropic investments are generally directed towards “big bet technology” or innovation, both of which are focused on future climate change mitigation and are less relevant for present-day adaptation in low-income communities
Thank you for supporting community-driven solar energy solutions.

Questions Or Comments
Email: kate@honnoldfoundation.org
9/6/23
Chelsea Chee, Deputy Director
Diné & Hopi Nations

- 2 tribes
- 29,000+ square miles
- 186,000+ people
- 13,000+ no electricity
About Us

Mission

To bring Indigenous-led affordable solar power solutions and knowledge to Diné (Navajo) and Hopi communities.
New program for Native Renewables

Applicants for pilot monthly lending program to own solar

Very little applicants before campaign

Off-Grid Installs

Workforce

Education

Our Work
Our Team

- Incorporated as 501c3 in 2020
- 55+ years of combined solar experience
- 8 of 15 tribal staff members live in communities we support
Honnold Foundation Support

- Pilot project
- Powered & repowered 13 homes
- Levine Impact Lab
Impact on People at NRI

● Tested our theory in safe environment
● Increased team knowledge, efficiency, & effectiveness
  ○ Gain a better understanding of outdated equipment
  ○ Strengthen and grow team capacity to install and work in teams
● Space & encouragement to work on our dreams
● Increased customer knowledge in solar
Case Study

- Mother & daughter
- 5+ miles from utility grid
- Multiple trips
  - 50% wired
  - Soil conditions
  - Winter weather
  - Customer communications
Lessons Learned & Challenges

- Customer communication
- Tracking weather
- Thorough site assessments
- Team communication
- Contingency planning
- Building people & processes
- Support to dream & plan
Thank you!

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Check out our video!
www.NativeRenewables.org